10) dall'autrice e che aiuta senz'altro a comprendere a fondo le implicazioni del suo discorso critico, è il tanto studiato 'folle volo' ulissiaco. L'eroe greco diventa evidentemente un prezioso strumento a disposizione di Dante per la delineazione del paradigma cruciforme del suo poema. La sua trasgressiva navigazione è infatti orientata ad ovest, direzione opposta a quella di Gerusalemme, verso il 'basso' del mondo rispetto al braccio corto della croce posto in 'alto' a levante. Egli è pure una *figura Christi* negativa, in quanto — con lo stratagemma escogitato per udire incolume le sirene — richiama il Salvatore nel suo ruolo iconico di albero maestro della nave ecclesiale. I remi, che diventeranno 'ali', sono anche le navate laterali di una struttura architettonica cruciforme tragicamente rovesciata. Sovversione spaziale e rischio retorico consumato nel fluire del tempo sono così inestricabilmente fusi nella diegesi ulissiaca: l'Itacense non dissemina, come Paolo, la *Buona Novella*, ma è vittima della sua stessa *hybris* oratoria che lo allontana, nel suo farsi, dalla vera comunità dei credenti. Il suo, vorremmo aggiungere noi, non è quindi solo mondo *senza gente*, ma anche spazio *extra Ecclesiam* (considerata corpo mistico del Cristo) della dannazione, in quanto alla struttura cruciforme di certe mappe, come ad esempio quella del *Planisfero* di Gervasio di Tilbury del 1236, veniva sovrapposta anche la rappresentazione del corpo di Cristo. Dunque oltrepassare lo stretto di Gibilterra fu per l'Ulisse di Dante non soltanto l'infrangimento di un divieto ma qualcosa di molto simile ad una 'bestemmia geografica'.

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Fasani, Remo. *L'infinito endecasillabo e tre saggi danteschi*. Ravenna: Longo, 2007. Pp. 139. ISBN 88-8063-534-4

As Remo Fasani clearly states in the book's preface, *L'infinito endecasillabo e tre saggi danteschi* consists of a collection of essays divided into two parts and followed by two appendices. The first part is devoted to a series of essays on a number of issues relating to metre while the second part deals with questions of exegesis. The appendices are, in actuality, two further essays, one in Italian and one in German. The first appendix / essay suggests a lexical analysis as a possible solution to the question of the *Fiore's* authorship. The second proposes translating the *Commedia* into German using its original metre as opposed to *fünffüssiger Iambus* (iambic pentameter.)

Given the breadth of the subject matter covered by these thirteen essays, it is not surprising that, as a book, *L'infinito endecasillabo* lacks a tight thematic coherence. Rather, it presents itself almost as the author's musings on a variety of topics that he finds interesting but upon which he has not reached any definitive conclusions. And in that respect many of the essays fail to satisfy the reader. Fasani is a master at cataloguing verse after verse of poetry, analyzing the most minute of variations in metrical conventions, but ultimately the reader is still left asking himself what it all means. This is most particularly the case with the essays in the first part of the book, but the same can be said of the essay that is included as an appen-

dix, "Confronto minimo tra *Il Fiore* e le *Rime* di Dante." In confronting the question of whether or not *Il Fiore* is properly attributable to Dante, Fasani presents the reader with three lists of words: those found only in *Il Fiore*, those found only in *Le Rime* and/or in the *Commedia*, and those found in *Il Fiore* and in either or both of *Le Rime* and the *Commedia* but with variation. These lists obviously represent painstakingly detailed research, but as Fasani himself recognizes, the best they can do is provide a basis for further research into an issue that may ultimately have no resolution.

Similarly the first essay, "L'apocope nel testo della *Commedia*", presents a spectacularly complete catalogue of all the instances of *apocope* throughout all three canticles, divided into categories determined by their varying lexical and metrical contexts, such as for example, *Versi col fonema "gli" e il sostantivo "Dio."* After reading through pages and pages of such lists, I was naturally quite eager to see what conclusion the author might reach in terms of the larger significance of the great variety of instances in which Dante uses *apocope*. In the final paragraphs Fasani moves towards a unified theory based upon which exceptions to the standard metrical rules might be associated with the subconscious. But however tantalizing such a suggestion is, the discussion is truncated and the reader is left wishing that Fasani had pursued this line of thought rather than moving on to the next essay "Intorno all'Endecasillabo" and the next after that, "Le mutazioni dell'Endecasillabo." Both essays adopt a structure similar to that found in the first and, like the first, leave the reader similarly unsated. The same can be said of most of the essays in Part 1.

The fourth essay, "Numerologia del Sonetto", however, is a notable exception. In contrast to the majority of the essays on metre "Numerologia" does not consist of pages and pages of catalogued lines of poetry followed by a brief suggestion as to what one might infer from them. Here Fasani considers first the allegorical significance of the various numbers that give form to the sonnet's metrical structure. He considers, for example, the theological associations of the number fourteen, the number of lines in a sonnet. He considers, the numbers 6 and 8, the number of lines into which the sonnet is traditionally divided, as well as the numbers 3, 4, 7 and 28. More important, though, than this *riassunto* of medieval numerology, however fascinating, is the fact that here Fasani considers how the semiotic potential of these numbers may very well have been considered in the invention of the sonnet. He posits that the form of the sonnet is thus itself a signifier, though he does not use this terminology. His implication that poetic form itself might convey significance is not especially revolutionary given the somewhat more obvious example of the triune structure of the *Commedia*, but its application to the case of the sonnet structure suggests that scholars would do well to reexamine other forms of poetry originating in the Middle Ages in terms of their numerology.

In general, the three essays that form the second part of the book are much more satisfying. "Tre Cruces" challenges the standard Petrocchi edition of the *Commedia* with respect to three key passages (*Purg.* 26:146, *Purg.* 23:34, *Purg.* 1:115) and offers an alternative philological choice in each case. In "Chi sono le tre fiere di Dante?" Fasani presents a convincing and compelling argument in favor

of interpreting the three *fiere* as a parody of the Trinity and concomitantly as representative of heresy. Finally, in the third essay “L’altro stilnovo: ammonizioni e invettive nella *Commedia*” Fasani considers the various forms of admonition and invective found throughout the three canticles and proposes that their use in the *Commedia* offers an alternative to the “Sweet New Style” of Dante’s early literary forays. All three of these essays offer new insights in traditional issues in Dante studies and by themselves would justify the book’s publication. This is not to say that the metrical essays are without value, not at all. Rather, given the clear evidence of Fasani’s unique perspective on the exegetical issues, it seems obvious that had the author completed the thoughts alluded to in the closing paragraphs in those articles, Dante scholarship would have been so much the richer.

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Vettori, Alessandro. *Poets of Divine Love. Franciscan Mystical Poetry of the Thirteenth Century*. Fordham Series in Medieval Studies, 3. New York: Fordham University Press, 2004. Pp. 320. ISBN 0-8232-2325-6. US\$55 (hardcover).

As “two thirteenth-century friars” sharing “Franciscanism, Umbrian origin and language, radicalism in the interpretation of the rule of poverty, and literary inclination,” Vettori states in the Introduction to his well researched and thorough two-part monograph dedicated to the lives and laude of Francis of Assisi and Iacopone da Todi and to the multiple intersections and overlaps between their biographies and poetry, the mystics have much in common, both materially and spiritually, in terms of experience and socio-cultural exposure (xiii). In addition to writing in “the same poetic genre of the lauda” and using “similar thematic and rhetorical structures and images,” the poets “have common spiritual roots,” and “depend on the same biblical sources for inspiration,” specifically the Book of Genesis (xiii). Furthermore, “stand[ing] alone as the only two Franciscan poets in the Italian literary canon,” Vettori aptly notes that Francis of Assisi and Iacopone da Todi share “an awareness of inchoation,” that is, “both are aware of operating at the beginning of the Italian literary tradition” (xiii).

Essentially, however, the poets contrast as much they compare. As Vettori notes, “they diverge in their approach to the material world and in their emphasis on different aspects of the Christian faith;” more notably, Francis’s perspective is “luminous” and “positive,” and his lauda “The Canticle of Brother Sun” has a “peaceful, appeased” melody, while Iacopone’s outlook is “somber, pessimistic,” and many of his laude possess a “fiery, tormented” rhythm, and thus their “poetic productions [...] reflect the two opposite sides of the Franciscan theological spectrum and of Christian theology” (xiii). One might also note, as Vettori did – and it is by no means an insignificant observation – that Francis of Assisi produced one lauda in the vernacular, while Iacopone produced an entire *canzoniere*: in Vettori’s words, “The Canticle of Brother Sun” is “Francis’s only attributable poetic text in the vernacular,” while Iacopone’s laude form a “*corpus poeticus* with an internal